

Pilgrimage

The English Experience from Becket to Bunyan

Edited by

Colin Morris and Peter Roberts



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

PUBLISHED BY THE PRESS SYNDICATE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE
The Pitt Building, Trumpington Street, Cambridge, United Kingdom

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 2RU, UK
40 West 20th Street, New York, NY 10011-4211, USA
477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia
Ruiz de Alarcón 13, 28014 Madrid, Spain
Dock House, The Waterfront, Cape Town 8001, South Africa
<http://www.cambridge.org>

© Cambridge University Press 2002

This book is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception
and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements,
no reproduction of any part may take place without
the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2002

Printed in the United Kingdom at the University Press, Cambridge

Typeface Plantin 10/12 pt. System L^AT_EX 2_ε [TB]

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication data

Pilgrimage: the English experience from Becket to Bunyan / edited by
Colin Morris and Peter Roberts.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0 521 80811 1

1. England – Religious life and customs. 2. Christian pilgrims
and pilgrimages – England – History I. Morris, Colin,
1928– II. Roberts, Peter.

BR747 .P57 2002

263'.04242–dc21 2001043673

ISBN 0 521 80811 1 hardback

Contents

<i>List of illustrations</i>	<i>page</i> vii
<i>Notes on contributors</i>	x
<i>Preface</i>	xii
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	xiii
<i>List of abbreviations</i>	xv
PETER ROBERTS	
Introduction	1
COLIN MORRIS	
1 The pilgrimages of the Angevin kings of England, 1154–1272	12
NICHOLAS VINCENT	
2 The early imagery of Thomas Becket	46
RICHARD GAMESON	
3 Canterbury and the architecture of pilgrimage shrines in England	90
TIM TATTON-BROWN	
4 Curing bodies and healing souls: pilgrimage and the sick in medieval East Anglia	108
CAROLE RAWCLIFFE	
5 Pilgrimage to Jerusalem in the late Middle Ages	141
COLIN MORRIS	
6 The dynamics of pilgrimage in late medieval England	164
EAMON DUFFY	
7 The Pilgrimage of Grace and the pilgrim tradition of holy war	178
MICHAEL BUSH	

vi	Contents	
8	Politics, drama and the cult of Thomas Becket in the sixteenth century	199
	PETER ROBERTS	
9	'To be a pilgrim': constructing the Protestant life in early modern England	238
	N. H. KEEBLE	
	<i>Index</i>	257

1 The pilgrimages of the Angevin kings of England 1154–1272*

Nicholas Vincent

The present investigation is to be read as but one small part of a much larger study of the religion of England's medieval kings: a study that richly deserves to be written, but that as yet has failed to attract an author. Here I intend to confine myself to a single aspect of the king's religion: the royal pilgrimage. In doing so, I hope to challenge what little secondary writing there exists on the subject, and in particular to suggest that the pilgrimages made by the Angevin kings of England represent a far more complex and significant phenomenon than just ordinary pilgrimage writ large.¹ A consideration of royal pilgrims may also lead us to raise yet a further challenge to the anthropological model of pilgrimage, imported into historical studies in the 1970s, and at the same time may dissuade us from drawing too rigid a distinction between pilgrimage and the king's more general religious devotions. As I hope to prove, it may also force us to reconsider an issue with which English historians have shown themselves somewhat reluctant to engage: the king's sacrality. My field of study will be limited to the period from the accession of Henry II in 1154, to the death of his grandson, Henry III, in 1272, spanning the reigns of the first four Plantagenet kings. There is no real justification for these limits, save that they coincide conveniently with my own area of expertise, and that they incorporate what might be described as the 'Golden Age' of English pilgrimage. I might also, in defence, plead that after 1272, and as a result of the work of Michael Prestwich and others, we have a slightly better understanding of the dynamics of kingly piety than we do for the preceding two centuries.²

* I am grateful to Henry Mayr-Harting, Bernard Hamilton and to various of the speakers at the Canterbury Colloquium for their assistance in the writing of this chapter.

¹ See here the remarks of Ben Nilson, 'The Medieval Experience at the Shrine', in J. Stopford (ed.), *Pilgrimage Explored* (Woodbridge, 1999), p. 122: 'The substance of these beliefs did not change with social status, only the scale and style with which they were acted out. Thus the actions of a king . . . were directed with the same hopes and expectations as [those of] the average supplicant.' I must apologise to Dr Nilson for making merry with what is otherwise an extremely compelling piece of work.

² See M. Prestwich, 'The Piety of Edward I', in W. M. Ormrod (ed.), *England in the Thirteenth Century: Proceedings of the 1984 Harlaxton Symposium* (Harlaxton, 1985),

Pilgrimage ran in the blood of Henry II, the first of the Angevin kings, as a tradition inherited from all sides of his family, from his Angevin, Norman and Anglo-Saxon ancestors. From his native Anjou, Henry's paternal great-great-grandfather, Count Fulk Nerra, had made at least three and possibly four penitential pilgrimages to Jerusalem, establishing a tradition whereby, a century later, Henry's grandfather, another Count Fulk, came not only to visit but to rule in the Holy Land.³ From the east, the counts returned with relics, of the true Cross and of St Nicholas, that in due course were to provide the focus for pilgrimage to various of the city churches of Angers and Tours, in addition to the relics, most notably of St Martin, that those churches already possessed.⁴ Jerusalem had also been the object of the penitential pilgrimage undertaken in the 1030s by Henry II's maternal great-grandfather, Duke Robert of Normandy, and thereafter had attracted large numbers of Robert's subjects and descendants to serve in the first and all subsequent crusades.⁵ Although, after their Conquest of England in 1066, there had been some resistance by the Normans to the cult of the Anglo-Saxon saints, by the 1090s Anglo-Saxon relics were being translated with enthusiasm to shrines newly constructed by England's Norman bishops and kings.⁶ William the Conqueror himself passed the night before Hastings with phylacteries around his neck containing relics of the saints. Others, which he had acquired from the treasury of the Anglo-Saxon kings, he bequeathed to his monastery at Battle, where they are said to have

pp. 120–8; A. J. Taylor, 'Edward I and the Shrine of St Thomas at Canterbury', *JBA*, 132 (1979), 22–8; A. Taylor, 'Royal Alms and Oblations in the Later 13th Century', in F. Emmison and R. Stephens (eds.), *Tribute to an Antiquary: Essays presented to Marc Fitch* (London, 1976), pp. 93–125; D. W. Burton, 'Requests for Prayers and Royal Propaganda under Edward I', in P. R. Coss and S. D. Lloyd (eds.), *Thirteenth Century England*, vol. III (Woodbridge, 1991), pp. 25–35.

³ B. S. Bachrach, 'The Pilgrimages of Fulk Nerra Count of the Angevins, 987–1040', in T. F. X. Noble and J. J. Contreni (eds.), *Religion, Culture and Society in the Early Middle Ages: Studies in Honor of Richard E. Sullivan* (Kalamazoo, 1987), pp. 205–17.

⁴ Y. Mailfert, 'Fondation du monastère Bénédictin de Saint-Nicolas d'Angers', *Bibliothèque de l'Ecole des Chartes*, 92 (1931), 43–61, esp. 55–6; J. Riley-Smith, 'King Fulk of Jerusalem and "the Sultan of Babylon"', in B. Z. Kedar et al. (eds.), *Montjoie: Studies in Crusade History in Honour of Hans Eberhard Mayer* (London, 1997), pp. 55–8, including the special arrangements made at St Laud at Angers in the 1130s for the reception of the count of Anjou whenever he should return to Angers from pilgrimage.

⁵ E. C. M. Van Houts (ed.), *The Gesta Normannorum Ducum of William of Jumièges, Orderic Vitalis and Robert of Torigni*, 2 vols., OMT (Oxford, 1992–5), vol. II, pp. 78–85; R. H. C. Davis and M. Chibnall (eds.), *The Gesta Guillelmi of William of Poitiers*, OMT (Oxford, 1998), pp. 78–9, with some extremely interesting but speculative remarks by Bachrach, 'Pilgrimages of Fulk Nerra', pp. 208–10.

⁶ Amongst many other studies, see S. J. Ridyard, '"Condigna Veneratio": Post-Conquest Attitudes to the Saints of the Anglo-Saxons', *ANS*; vol. IX, (1986), pp. 179–206.

been employed in a not entirely successful attempt to attract pilgrims.⁷ No Anglo-Saxon king of England had visited Jerusalem, but several had made pilgrimages to the almost equally distinguished shrines of Rome. It was during a pilgrimage to Rome, in 1027, that king Cnut sought special privileges for English pilgrims travelling to the Holy City, whilst the very earliest surviving correspondence between an English and a continental king, that between Offa and Charlemagne, concerns the rights of English pilgrims to free passage through Carolingian France.⁸ Henry II's lands, from Durham to Limoges, were criss-crossed by pilgrim routes, scattered with shrines and piled high with holy relics, often of considerable antiquity. It is therefore hardly surprising that Henry, like most of his ancestors and successors, should have proved both an enthusiastic and a frequent pilgrim.

Here, however, at the very start of our enquiry, we come up against a major problem. If we seek to apply the anthropological model of pilgrimage, championed most notably by Victor and Edith Turner, we find that England's pilgrim kings differed in several important respects from what the Turners would regard as the pilgrim norm. For the Turners, pilgrimage can be defined as a ritual practice, carrying the pilgrim beyond the frontiers of daily experience, and characterised by such concepts as 'liminality', 'transience' and 'communitas'. Turnerian pilgrimage stands outside the normal structures of authority, requiring its participants to enter a nomadic state in which the individual pilgrim may transcend the more conventional distinctions of class and social status.⁹ Putting aside, for the moment, any scepticism we might feel towards an analysis that, in its search for meaning, seeks to reinvent the English language, it is clear that such concepts as 'transience' and 'communitas' cannot easily be applied to the pilgrimage experience of England's medieval kings. To begin with, and unlike, say, a peasant who might pass the larger part of his life in one place and in one set of social relations, the Plantagenet kings

⁷ Davis and Chibnall (eds.), *William of Poitiers*, pp. 124–5; E. Searle (ed.), *The Chronicle of Battle Abbey*, OMT (Oxford, 1980), pp. 90–1, 102–5. For another reliquary, given by William to the monks of Rochester, and for relics of SS Denis, Nicaise, Eustace and Rumbald reputedly given by the king to Westminster Abbey, see J. Thorpe, *Registrum Roffense* (London, 1769), p. 120; John Flete, *The History of Westminster Abbey*, ed. J. A. Robinson (Cambridge, 1909), p. 71.

⁸ V. Ortenberg, *The English Church and the Continent in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries* (Oxford, 1992), p. 59, and for the burial of Kings Offa and Ceadwalla at Rome, see p. 135. For the letters of Charlemagne to Offa, AD795, see *PL*, 98, col. 907.

⁹ These ideas are most fully expressed in V. and E. Turner, *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture* (Oxford, 1978), with a particularly illuminating attempt to define terms at pp. 249–51. For a recent critique, see Stopford in *Pilgrimage Explored*, p. xii, citing various of the more recent anthropological studies edited by J. Eade and M. J. Sallnow, *Contesting the Sacred: The Anthropology of Christian Pilgrimage* (London, 1991).

were of their essence itinerant, travelling ceaselessly from one region of their dominion to another. Even Henry III, the first post-Conquest king to begin to establish a permanent administrative capital for himself, spent far more time touring his realm than he ever did in residence at his palace in Westminster. It was the royal itinerary, and the near ceaseless round of campaigning, hunting expeditions, crown-wearings, solemn entries and local visitations, that characterised all western European monarchies from the fall of Rome until at least the fourteenth century. Even earlier, it has been argued that the very idea of Christian pilgrimage may have developed in emulation of the journey to Jerusalem conducted by Helena, mother of the fourth-century Roman emperor Constantine. Helena's journey can be regarded as merely the latest in a long tradition of visitations, the *itineria principum*, orchestrated by the imperial court since the time of Augustus, and in this particular instance intended to forge an alliance between Constantine's troubled family and the Christian God. It may thus have been the Roman imperial itinerary that first brought pilgrimage into vogue, rather than any pre-existing idea of pilgrimage which first encouraged Helena to journey to Jerusalem.¹⁰ With the fall of Rome, and in the absence of any more stable form of government, it was the royal itinerary that more than anything else served to impose order, justice and authority upon the otherwise disunited regions of barbarian and early medieval Europe.¹¹ The Plantagenets, and their itinerant court, so graphically described by Walter Map or Peter of Blois, were heirs to this long tradition.¹² To this extent, there was often no more 'transience' in the decision made by a Plantagenet king to set out for a pilgrim shrine than there was in the daily run of his nomadic existence.

Likewise, if we take another of the Turners' ideas, 'communitas', we shall find that, both in import and magnificence, the king's pilgrimage remained very much a royal phenomenon, set apart from the experience of less exalted pilgrims. The significance attached to royal pilgrimage and

¹⁰ See here the stimulating essay by K. G. Holum, 'Hadrian and St Helena: Imperial Travel and the Origins of Christian Holy Land Pilgrimage', in R. Ousterhout (ed.), *The Blessings of Pilgrimage*, Illinois Byzantine Studies 1 (Urbana and Chicago, 1990), pp. 66–81.

¹¹ See in general J. W. Bernhardt, *Itinerant Kingship and Royal Monasteries in Early Medieval Germany, c. 936–1075* (Cambridge, 1993), esp. p. 45ff.

¹² The Plantagenet itinerary is best approached through the work of J. E. A. Jolliffe, *Angevin Kingship* (London, 1955), esp. ch. 7, and R. Bartlett, *England Under the Norman and Angevin Kings 1075–1225* (Oxford, 2000), pp. 133–43. See also the image of the diabolic hunt, developed as an image of Henry II's court by Walter Map, *De Nugis Curialium: Courtiers' Trifles*, ed. M. R. James, C. N. L. Brooke and R. A. B. Mynors, OMT (Oxford, 1983), pp. 26–31, 370–3, with commentary by L. Harf-Lancner, 'L'Enfer de la cour: la cour d'Henri II Plantagenet et la Mesnie Hellequin', in P. Contamine (ed.), *L'Etat et les aristocraties (France, Angleterre, Ecosse) XIIe–XVIIe siècle* (Paris, 1989), pp. 38–9, as drawn to my attention by Martin Aurell.

the status bestowed upon a church or relic by its ability to attract royal visitors, inevitably set a pilgrim king apart from any more humble visitor to a shrine. The king's degree and status were preserved, even in the act of pilgrimage. Long before the advent of written record, there is evidence to suggest that the social elites of prehistoric Britain may have been guaranteed a different reception at their holy sites from the average run of visitors.¹³ With the Plantagenets, we might care to remember the experience of Henry II, during his penitential visit to the shrine of Thomas Becket in 1174. In theory, Henry came in all humility, dismounting at his first sight of Becket's cathedral, and processing thereafter through the streets of Canterbury from St Dunstons to the shrine, barefoot and wearing nothing more than a hair shirt and a smock.¹⁴ In practice, so accustomed were the monks of Canterbury to laying on a special display for their royal visitors, that Henry had sternly to forbid them from greeting him in procession at the city's outskirts, or from escorting him in majesty to their church.¹⁵ To become a pilgrim, it would seem, Henry had first to command his subjects to respect his pilgrim status. A king who has to command the observation of his own humility cannot be said to be truly humbled.

Moreover, for all that Henry might spend the night in tears by Becket's shrine, and on the morrow instruct the monks and clergy to discipline him with more than two hundred strokes of the rod, no ordinary pilgrim could then have made the rich offerings that Henry bestowed upon the monks, of four marks of pure gold, a silk pall and an annual rent of £40 from the royal manor of Milton.¹⁶ Here again we might recall the chronicler Salimbene's description of King Louis IX of France, on his departure for crusade in 1248. To Salimbene it was the very fact that Louis arrived at Sens dressed as a humble pilgrim, on foot and with scrip and staff, that appeared so remarkable. What Salimbene observed is in fact a common phenomenon: the royal display of humility that remains royal precisely because it is so ostentatiously humble. Having arrived dressed as a pilgrim, Louis did not depart from Sens until his court had been served with a sumptuous banquet that included cherries, crayfish,

¹³ R. Bradley, 'Pilgrimage in Prehistoric Britain?', in Stopford (ed.), *Pilgrimage Explored*, pp. 11, 23.

¹⁴ For an account of this pilgrimage, drawn from several sources, see F. Barlow, *Thomas Becket* (London, 1986), pp. 269–70.

¹⁵ E. Grim, in *Materials*, vol. II, p. 445: 'Moris quidem fuerat conventum regibus festive procedere, et nonnulla reverentie obsequia solemniter exhibere, sed hec universa sibi prohibebat impendi, qui magis luctu quam letitia pascebatur'.

¹⁶ *Materials*, vol. II, pp. 446–7; Barlow, *Becket*, p. 270, and for the rent, originally of £30, awarded at Easter 1173, raised after Henry's pilgrimage in July 1174 to £40, see Henry's charter, now CCA Chartae Antiquae B337; *Pipe Roll 19 Henry II*, pp. 80–1; *Pipe Roll 21 Henry II*, p. 208.

and eels cooked in the finest sauce.¹⁷ Over and over again, as we shall see, the royal experience of pilgrimage was distinguished by particular traditions and by a particular, privileged approach to the shrine and its relics, that render it unlikely that such pilgrimages were governed by much sense of 'communitas', or freedom from the normal social distinctions that set king and subjects apart. As any reader of Chaucer can appreciate – although it seems to have escaped the notice of anthropologists – there was almost as great an awareness of social distinction amongst the Canterbury pilgrims as there would be today amongst visitors to the royal enclosure at Ascot.

Thus far we have referred to pilgrimage as if it were a neatly definable phenomenon – a journey in pursuit of the Holy that can be distinguished from the more ordinary run of religious devotions. Medieval writers were clearly at pains to establish such a distinction, if only to set the genuine pilgrim apart from his more disreputable counterpart, the vagabond or commercial traveller. In canon law, a pilgrimage was defined as either an obligatory journey imposed in penance for wrongdoing, or as a voluntary act that nonetheless involved a preliminary vow, and that was accomplished thereafter in the proper habit of a pilgrim, carrying the pilgrim insignia of scrip and staff.¹⁸ If we seek to apply such distinctions to the Plantagenet kings, we shall again run into difficulty. Of penitential royal pilgrimage, we have no evidence during our period, since even the remarkable visit paid to Becket's shrine by Henry II in 1174 was made at the king's own insistence, and not in obedience to a sentence imposed by the Church.¹⁹ As to the elements of the pilgrim's vow, scrip and staff, we have precious little proof that these things played much part in the king's devotions. Richard I, it is true, accepted the insignia of staff and scrip on setting out for crusade – depending upon which account one reads, at Tours or at Vézelay, but in either case in a location that itself could boast a rich tradition of pilgrimage, to St Martin or

¹⁷ Salimbene de Adam, *Cronica*, ed. F. Bernini, 2 vols. (Bari, 1942), vol. I, pp. 316–21, whence L. Carolus-Barré, *Le Procès de canonisation de Saint Louis (1272–1297): Essai de reconstruction*, Collections de l'Ecole française de Rome 195 (Rome, 1994), pp. 294–5.

¹⁸ H. Gilles, 'Lex Peregrinorum', *Cahiers de Fanjeaux* 15: *Le Pèlerinage* (1980), 161–89, esp. 163–70.

¹⁹ Edward Grim (in *Materials*, vol. II, p. 445) suggests that in 1174 Henry was inspired by a dream to visit Canterbury. His agreement to take the Cross within nine months of the compromise of Avranches (1172) might to some extent be regarded as an enforced pilgrimage, but in the event he was to evade this stipulation, and only took the Cross, on his own terms, in 1188: H. E. Mayer, 'Henry II of England and the Holy Land', *EHR*, 97 (1982), 721–39, esp. 721–2. For penitential pilgrimage in general, see the classic study by C. Vogel, 'Le Pèlerinage pénitentiel', *Revue des Sciences Religieuses*, 38 (1964), 113–53, reprinted in Vogel, *En Rémission de péchés* (London, 1994), ch. 7.

to St Mary Magdalene. The staff is said to have broken in his hand.²⁰ Thereafter, and with the exception of their signings with the cross – a ceremony that already stood outside the pilgrim norm – the only other occasions on which the Plantagenets are known to have put on the theatrical props of pilgrimage came in the 1190s, when Richard sought to disguise himself as a pilgrim in returning via Austria, and in 1242, when at the bridge of Taillebourg, faced by a vastly superior French army, Henry III's brother Richard of Cornwall went unarmed into the enemy camp, carrying nothing more than a pilgrim staff as a reminder of the services that he had rendered to the French on crusade.²¹ Elsewhere, the most that we can hope for from the chronicle sources is some comment that a particular journey was made by a king *orationis gratia*, or *voto et devotione*, phrases that are applied, for example, to the visits made by King John to the shrines of Bury St Edmunds and St Albans immediately after his coronation.²²

Medieval Christendom boasted three great pilgrim destinations: Jerusalem, Rome and Compostela. It is a remarkable fact that during our period not one of these shrines was visited by a Plantagenet king. All four of our kings took vows to depart on crusade, and hence to visit the Holy Land. Only one of them, Richard I, actually set sail, and, as is well known, Richard was never to enter the city of Jerusalem. More remarkably still, and despite having travelled from Marseilles to Sicily with frequent stops along the Italian coast, Richard deliberately passed up the opportunity to visit the Holy Places of Rome.²³ For the rest, Henry the Young King, Richard's elder brother, although never a pilgrim to Jerusalem, accomplished a pilgrimage there by proxy, on his deathbed dispatching William Marshal as a pilgrim in his stead.²⁴ Henry III, whose own son, the future Edward I, was in the Holy Land at the time of his father's death, obtained,

²⁰ Roger of Howden, *Chronica*, ed. W. Stubbs, 4 vols., RS (London, 1868–71), vol. III, pp. 36–7; (Roger of Howden), *Gesta Regis Henrici Secundi Benedicti abbatis*, ed. W. Stubbs, 2 vols., RS (London, 1867), vol. II, p. 111.

²¹ For Richard I, see Howden, *Chronica*, vol. III, pp. 185–6, also remarked by the Salzburg annalist, 'Annalium Salisburgensium additamentum', ed. W. Wattenbach, *MGH SS*, vol. XIII p. 240. For Richard of Cornwall, see Matthew Paris, *Chronica Majora*, ed. H. R. Luard, 7 vols., RS (London, 1872–83), vol. IV, p. 211. For other, non-royal examples of the pilgrim habit being used as disguise, see Y. Dossat, 'Types exceptionnels de pèlerins: l'hérétique, le voyageur déguisé, le professionnel', *Cahiers de Fanjeaux* 15 (1980), 213–19.

²² Roger of Wendover, in Paris, *Chronica Majora*, vol. II, p. 456; H. E. Butler (ed.), *The Chronicle of Jocelin of Brakelond* (London, 1949), pp. 116–17, and note that before returning to France in June 1199, John also visited Becket's shrine at Canterbury: 'Itinerary of King John', in T. D. Hardy (ed.), *Rotuli Litterarum Patentium* (London, 1835), *sub dat.* 12 June 1199; *Radulphi de Diceto Opera Historica*, ed. W. Stubbs, 2 vols., RS (London, 1876), vol. II, p. 166.

²³ J. Gillingham, *Richard I* (New Haven, CT, 1999), p. 130.

²⁴ D. Crouch, *William Marshal* (London, 1990), pp. 49, 51–2.

via Edward, a grant of plenary indulgence from the church of Jerusalem, forgiving him all the sins of which he was truly penitent and confessed, and extending a similar indulgence to Henry's long-dead father and mother, King John and Queen Isabella, deemed to be participators in the indulgence available to those who lent aid to the Holy Land. However since this award was made only a few days before Henry died, and more than a thousand miles away, he can never have learned of its provisions.²⁵ Both Henry II and his son Henry the Young King voiced a desire to visit Compostela. Neither actually accomplished this desire, and in both cases they may have had other considerations in mind than religious devotion. Henry II may have been angling for diplomatic contacts with the kingdom of Leon: the Young King to escape from his overbearing father.²⁶

It is worth asking why the Plantagenet kings failed to follow in the footsteps of their ancestors, beyond the confines of the Plantagenet realm. A similar reluctance has been observed in the case of Louis IX of France, a notable crusader, and an avid pilgrim, but a king who failed to follow Capetian tradition by visiting any European shrine outside the boundaries of France.²⁷ Henry III, it is true, visited Saint-Denis, the passion relics of the Sainte-Chapelle, and a round of French shrines, including those of St Edmund of Canterbury at Pontigny and of the Virgin Mary at Chartres, during the Anglo-French negotiations of 1254, 1259–60, and 1262.²⁸ However, for the rest, it was the shrines of England and the Plantagenet dominion that received the vast majority of royal visits, perhaps because of the simple logistical difficulty of venturing beyond the realm, but more likely through a perceived, dare one say patriotic, sense that it was the saints of England and the Angevin realm, or at least those saints whose relics reposed within the king's dominion, who were the king's chief spiritual protectors. It was the hand of St James at Reading, not the body of Santiago at Compostela, to which the Plantagenets rendered their devotion.

²⁵ PRO E36/274 fol.250r (211r), apparently unprinted, issued by Brother Bernard the penitentiary of Jerusalem, at Acre on 20 September 1272.

²⁶ Howden, *Gesta*, vol. 1, pp. 114–15, 157; D. W. Lomax, 'The First English Pilgrims to Santiago de Compostela', in H. Mayr-Harting and R. I. Moore (eds.), *Studies in Medieval History Presented to R. H. C. Davis* (London, 1985), pp. 173–4.

²⁷ E.-R. Labande, 'Saint Louis Pèlerin', *Revue d'Histoire de l'Eglise de France*, 57 (1971), 5–18, esp. 9–10, reprinted in Labande, *Spiritualité et vie littéraire de l'occident, Xe–XIV^e siècle* (London, 1974), ch. 16.

²⁸ Paris, *Chronica Majora*, vol. v, pp. 467, 475–83; *Close Rolls 1259–61*, pp. 267–8; *Close Rolls 1261–4*, p. 145. Note, too, the pilgrimage made by the Lord Edward, son of Henry III, to the shrine of St Ninian, at Whithorn in Galloway in southern Scotland, in July 1256: R. Studd, *An Itinerary of the Lord Edward*, List and Index Society, 284 (2000), p. 30, as drawn to my attention by Robin Studd.

The fact that the kings of England made no pilgrimages to Jerusalem, Rome or Compostela; the fact that they seem rarely to have vowed their pilgrimages; and that they travelled without the insignia of scrip and staff, all suggest that we need to rethink any attempt we might otherwise make to distinguish between 'genuine' royal pilgrimage, and the more general run of royal devotions. When the king visited a monastery or church, it was customary for him to make offerings, of money, gold, silk, or more exceptionally of privileges or lands. Very seldom, though, can these awards be used to define a pilgrimage. To take just one example: Henry II issued numerous surviving charters on behalf of the monks of St Albans, keepers of the shrine not only of the English protomartyr Alban, but of Alban's teacher, the entirely apocryphal St Amphibalus, whose remains were re-discovered in dramatic circumstances, being translated to a new shrine in June 1178, and again, to a more fitting location, in June 1186.²⁹ There is no evidence, for or against, to suggest whether Henry II attended either of these translations. Of his dozen or so charters to the abbey, at least two were issued at St Albans itself, early in the reign, and of these two, the longer, confirming exemption from interference by the king's officers, was specifically made for the soul of the king, of Eleanor his wife and of his heirs and ancestors, an unusual formula which suggests a particular personal concern.³⁰ However, we have no proof that these awards were made *ex voto*, as the result of a pilgrimage, and our only indication that Henry took any interest in the abbey's shrine occurs in a brief reference in the St Albans' chronicle to his having supplied a precious cup for the reservation of the sacrament, matching gifts that had been made to the shrine by Abbot Simon.³¹ Not until the reign of Henry III do we begin to read of the king making regular visits to pray at St Albans, and of his bestowing offerings there of gold, silk and other precious objects: gifts, it should be noticed, including silk cloths indelibly marked with the king's name, and amulets permanently nailed to the shrine, that were intended for public display, presumably to advertise the king's largesse.³² Even then,

²⁹ For Amphibalus, see Howden, *Gesta*, vol. I, pp. 175–7; Matthew Paris, 'Gesta Abbatum', in *Chronica Monasterii S. Albani*, ed. H. T. Riley, 7 vols. RS (London, 1863–76), vol. IV part 1, pp. 192–3, 199–206; Paris, *Chronica Majora*, vol. II, pp. 301–8; F. McCulloch, 'Saints Alban and Amphibalus in the Works of Matthew Paris: Dublin, Trinity College MS 177', *Speculum*, 56 (1981), 761–85.

³⁰ *Calendar of Charter Rolls 1300–26*, pp. 17 no. 5, 19 no. 2.

³¹ Paris, 'Gesta Abbatum', pp. 189–90.

³² *Chronica Majora*, vol. IV, p. 402; vol. V, pp. 233–4, 257–8, 319–20, 489–90, 574, 617, 653–4; vol. VI, pp. 389–92. For a cloth embroidered with the words *Henricus rex*, given in 1182 to the shrine of St Martial at Limoges by Henry the Young King, see Geoffrey of Vigewois, in *RHGF*, vol. XVIII, p. 212. For special cloths given to Le Mans Cathedral by

none of the many accounts of these visits specifically refers to them as a pilgrimage.

Here we may well care to rethink our attempt to define pilgrimage as a specific and distinct category of the king's religious devotions. As an itinerant ruler, the king inevitably visited a whole series of locations that possessed shrines or relics worthy of veneration. It is hard, indeed, to name many places on the royal itinerary where relics and shrines were not to be found. As we shall see, the kings themselves travelled with a chapel that included a substantial collection of relics.³³ Rather than attempt to distinguish between the extraordinary ('pilgrimage'), and the ordinary ('devotion' or 'mere visitation'), it may be better to picture the king as being by his very nature a near-perpetual pilgrim. Seen in this light, the daily round of royal devotions, carried out in many different places across the realm, can be regarded as yet another means, and a significant one, by which the royal itinerary served to impose the king's authority upon realm and subjects alike. Kings might complain that their time was short, just as Henry II is said to have complained, towards the end of his life, that he had few spare moments in which to pray. Even at mass, where he could utter barely two paternosters, he was beset by petitioners, not only laymen, but clerks and monks who, showing no respect for the sacrament, ceaselessly bombarded him with their pleas.³⁴ Well might King John have sent up a note to Hugh of Lincoln during the Easter service in 1200, not once but three times, imploring the bishop to cut short his sermon and to get on with the mass, so that the king might dine after his Easter fasting.³⁵ Nonetheless, as even this story, so often quoted as a sign of John's impiety, should make plain, the king was not only sufficiently pious to fast during Holy Week, but better placed than anyone else to listen to the finest sermons and to visit the greatest shrines, virtually wherever his itinerary might take him. In doing so, kings not only brought their

Henry II, see Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale MS Latin 5211B, p. 81: 'Nobis modo dedit xi. pallia, pannumque illum sericum cum auratis imaginibus qui dicitur pannus regius, qui in magnis festiuis super altare beati Iuliani suspenditur.'

³³ See below pp. 34–6.

³⁴ Peter of Blois, 'Dialogus inter regem Henricum secundum et abbatem Bonevallis', ed. R. B. C. Huygens, *Revue Bénédictine*, 68 (1958), pp. 104–5. Sir Richard Southern, whilst continuing to cite this treatise from its unsatisfactory printing in *PL* 207, gives good reasons for accepting its basic accuracy, identifying the king's interlocutor as Christian abbot of Bonneval, and dating their interview to some time between February and May 1189: Southern, 'Peter of Blois and the Third Crusade', in Mayr-Harting and Moore (eds.), *Studies in Medieval History*, pp. 208–11.

³⁵ Adam of Eynsham, *Magna Vita Sancti Hugonis*, ed. D. L. Douie and D. H. Farmer, 2 vols., OMT, 2nd edn (Oxford, 1985), vol. II, pp. 142–3.

own problems and the problems of their realm before the saints for intercession, but, through their near ceaseless round of devotions, served to link one shrine to another into a chain of spiritual support, sanctifying their journeys around the realm and underpinning their attempts to impose royal authority upon their diverse dominions. Where previously the West Saxon kings had sought to introduce unity to their realm by translating the relics of the saints from outlying regions to the vicinity of the great royal necropolis at Winchester, the Plantagenets made a virtue out of necessity, employing the shrines of the saints, and the churches and monasteries that housed them, as stopping-off points in an otherwise ceaseless pattern of movement that encompassed even the most far-flung outposts of Plantagenet rule.³⁶ A glance at the accounts for the household expenses of King John, or later of Edward I, is sufficient to show that frequent oblations at the shrines of the saints take their place alongside hunting and warfare as an essential feature of the king's itinerary.³⁷

With this thought in mind, let us proceed to the king's devotions, and to those in particular that involved shrines, penitence or prayer, all of them features common to pilgrimage. Here, and without too rigid an attempt at classification, we can at least suggest some broad categories into which the king's devotions may be divided. We might begin with those many religious acts intended to procure or to offer thanks for recovery from illness, spiritual or physical. In 1170, as is well known, Henry II broke camp in Normandy and travelled as far south as Rocamadour in Quercy, to give thanks to the Virgin for his restoration to health.³⁸ At

³⁶ For the Anglo-Saxon period, see especially D. W. Rollason, 'Lists of Saints' Resting-Places in Anglo-Saxon England', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 7 (1978), 61–93, at 82–6; Rollason, 'The Shrines of Saints in Later Anglo-Saxon England: Distribution and Significance', in L. A. S. Butler and R. K. Morris (eds.), *The Anglo-Saxon Church*, Council for British Archaeology Research Report 60 (1986), pp. 32–43; Rollason, *Saints and Relics in Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford, 1989), ch. 6, pp. 133–68. For continental parallels, see E. Bozóky, 'La Politique des reliques des premiers comtes de Flandre (fin du IXe–fin du XIe siècle)', in Bozóky and A.-M. Helvétius (eds.), *Les Reliques: objets, cultes, symboles. Actes du colloque international de l'Université du Littoral-Côte d'Opale (Boulogne-sur-Mer) 4–6 septembre 1997* (Turnhout, 1999), pp. 271–92.

³⁷ The household accounts of King John (1209–10, and 1212–13) are printed in T. D. Hardy (ed.), *Rotuli de Liberate ac de misis et praestitis* (London, 1844), pp. 109–71; H. Cole (ed.), *Documents Illustrative of English History in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries* (London, 1844), pp. 231–69, with some analysis by C. R. Young, 'King John of England: An Illustration of the Medieval Practice of Charity', *Church History*, 24 (1960), 264–74. For a glimpse of the religious itinerary of Edward I, see Taylor, 'Royal Alms and Oblations' (above n. 2), pp. 112–16.

³⁸ E. Mason, '“Rocamadour in Quercy Above All Other Churches”: The Healing of Henry II', in W. J. Sheils (ed.), *The Church and Healing*, SCH 19 (Oxford, 1982), 39–54. For the supposed divinely imposed sickness from which the king had suffered, having failed to heed the advice of the blessed Hamo of Savigny to pardon a knight accused of plotting his death, sentenced to blinding and castration, see E. P. Sauvage, 'Vitae B.

Pontigny in 1254, Henry III is said to have recovered from illness at the shrine of St Edmund.³⁹ Linked to these are the journeys, such as that of Henry II to Canterbury in 1174, intended to acquire remission from spiritual sickness and sin. Kings, more perhaps than the average believer, were burdened with a sense of their own wrongdoing. After Becket's murder, in 1171, Henry II is said to have retired for forty days of penance and fasting, refusing to leave his apartments at Argentan.⁴⁰ Richard I, perhaps for sexual misconduct, undertook public penance at least twice, on the first occasion throwing himself naked before the feet of the assembled bishops.⁴¹ Even John is said to have undergone an, albeit temporary, conversion to good living as a result of viewing the images of kings condemned to damnation in the portal of Fontevraud, whilst his son the excessively pious Henry III is said to have confessed that he knew only too well the extent to which he had sinned against God and his saints by promoting his half-brother Aymer to the bishopric of Winchester.⁴² Towards the end of his life, Henry III granted significant alms to the nuns of Amesbury, for the souls of Arthur and Eleanor of Brittany, suggesting a particular desire to atone for the sins of his father King John.⁴³ Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown. As Henry II is said to have remarked, 'I have sinned more than most, for the whole life of the knight is passed in sin, nor have I time for proper repentance unless the Lord have mercy upon me.'⁴⁴

Particular events in a king's life might focus his mind upon the need for divine intercession with especial urgency. The king's accession and coronation were followed, in the case of both Richard I and John, by a brief progress around the greater pilgrim shrines of southern England: Bury, St Albans and Canterbury.⁴⁵ Marriage, or the birth of an heir, might inspire offerings to the saints, such as the statue of his wife, Eleanor of Provence, which Henry III commanded be placed upon the shrine of St Edward at Westminster, shortly after his marriage in 1236.⁴⁶ Seacrossings and negotiations with foreign powers might well lead the king to invoke divine aid, all the more so since the Plantagenets were rulers of

Petri Abrincensis et B. Hamonis monachorum coenobii Saviniacensis in Normannia', *Analecta Bollandiana*, 2 (1883), 534–5.

³⁹ Paris, *Chronica Majora*, vol. v, p. 475.

⁴⁰ Herbert of Bosham, in *Materials*, vol. III, pp. 541–3.

⁴¹ Howden, *Chronica*, vol. III, pp. 74–5, 288–90, and for commentary on the possibility that Richard's crimes included sodomy, see Gillingham, *Richard I*, pp. 263–5.

⁴² Adam of Eynsham, *Vita Sancti Hugonis*, vol. II, pp. 140–2; Paris, *Chronica Majora*, vol. v, pp. 332–3.

⁴³ *Calendar of Charter Rolls 1257–1300*, p. 100, as drawn to my attention by David Carpenter.

⁴⁴ Peter of Blois, 'Dialogus' (above n. 34), p. 111, lines 422–4.

⁴⁵ For John, see above note 22. For Richard, see L. Landon, *The Itinerary of King Richard I*, Pipe Roll Society n. s. 13 (1935), pp. 5, 16–21.

⁴⁶ *Calendar of Liberate Rolls 1226–40*, p. 243.

a cross-Channel dominion, many of whose subjects, including courtiers or even close royal kinsmen, had been drowned at sea, from the time of the wreck of the White Ship onwards.⁴⁷ In journeying to Ireland in 1171, Henry II passed via the shrine of St David's in Pembroke, and having subdued the Irish, returned to St David's the following year *orandi causa*.⁴⁸ According to Howden, he deliberately delayed his departure from Ireland so as not to set sail on Easter day.⁴⁹ Henry II on at least one occasion sent to Reading Abbey for the hand of St James, so that he might pray before it and obtain the saint's protection before crossing the Channel.⁵⁰ On the eve of taking ship from Barfleur into England, in the 1150s or 60s, he is said to have made a full confession of his sins committed from the cradle onwards, to the bishop of Evreux and a monk of Savigny.⁵¹ In 1259, before embarking for his negotiations with Louis IX, Henry III came to St Albans where he commanded that the shrine of St Alban be placed upon the high altar, beseeching the monks for their prayers in his forthcoming journey.⁵² As for journeys or devotions intended to obtain or to give thanks for the successful completion of international treaties, we might cite the various visits made by Henry II to Mont-Saint-Michel: in 1158, having secured the restoration of Nantes from the Bretons and before setting out to besiege Thouars, and again in 1166, *causa orationis*, following a second victory against the Bretons.⁵³ It may be that in 1172, during the settlement of the Becket dispute, negotiations between Henry and the papal legates were deliberately timed to take place at Avranches around Michaelmas, so that the king might thereafter render devotion to St Michael, in the event ruled out because Henry fell ill.⁵⁴

When negotiations failed, and warfare loomed, kings also sought to invoke the aid of the saints. The timing of Henry II's visit to Reading in March 1163 may have been providential, although it immediately preceded an expedition against the Welsh.⁵⁵ In 1183, and with Limoges under siege by Henry II, the rebellious Henry the Young King attended

⁴⁷ For the death of Plantagenet courtiers by drowning, see, for example, Howden, *Chronica*, vol. II, pp. 3–4; vol. III, pp. 105–6.

⁴⁸ J. Williams ab Ithel (ed.), *Annales Cambriae*, RS (London, 1860), pp. 53–4.

⁴⁹ Howden, *Gesta*, vol. I, p. 30.

⁵⁰ B. Kemp, 'The Miracles of the Hand of St James', *Berkshire Archaeological Jnl*, 65 (1970), 18 no. 26.

⁵¹ Sauvage, 'Vita B. Hamonis' (above n. 38), 531–2.

⁵² H. R. Luard (ed.), *Flores Historiarum*, 3 vols., RS (London, 1890), vol. II, pp. 431–2.

⁵³ Robert of Torigny, 'Chronica', in R. Howlett (ed.), *Chronicles of the Reigns of Stephen, Henry II and Richard I*, 4 vols., RS (London, 1885–9), vol. IV, pp. 197, 228.

⁵⁴ Torigny, 'Chronica', p. 254, and for pilgrimage, especially penitential pilgrimage to Mont-St-Michel, see E.-R. Labande, 'Les pèlerinages au Mont Saint-Michel pendant le Moyen Âge', in M. Baudet (ed.), *Millénaire Monastique du Mont Saint-Michel III: Culte de Saint Michel et pèlerinage au Mont* (Paris, 1971), pp. 237–50, esp. pp. 241, 243, reprinted in Labande, *Spiritualité et vie littéraire*, ch. 15.

⁵⁵ R. W. Eyton, *Court, Household and Itinerary of King Henry II* (London, 1878), pp. 61–2.

a procession of the relics of St Martial, no doubt in the hope of obtaining the saint's assistance against his father.⁵⁶ A century later, in 1264, Henry III travelled to Oxford, to the shrine of St Frideswide, *orationis gratia*, before joining battle with the barons at Northampton.⁵⁷ Although there is less evidence from Plantagenet England than from early medieval Europe for the deliberate timing of battles to coincide with the feasts of the saints, having made landfall at Cyprus around the feast of the translation of St Edmund (29 April) 1191, and having defeated the local tyrant a week later, it is perhaps no coincidence that Richard I sent back a newly captured golden banner to the shrine of St Edmund at Bury.⁵⁸ Henry II may have attached a particular significance to the feast day of St James (25 July), whose arm the king considered to be amongst the most precious of relics.⁵⁹ In 1166 or 1167, he originally planned to do battle with the Breton rebels on the feast day of SS Peter and Paul, 29 June, but was dissuaded by the blessed Hamo of Savigny, who prophesied that if the king chose a less holy day, he would be rewarded with victory.⁶⁰ Likewise, I would suggest that it was more than mere coincidence that led the monks of Westminster, acting in close co-operation with Henry II, to select Sunday 13 October 1163 as the date for the translation of the relics of the newly canonised St Edward the Confessor. We should bear in mind here that the Battle of Hastings had been fought on Saturday 14 October 1066, and that the canonisation of St Edward was widely linked to prophecies of Henry II as the heir to St Edward who would unite the stock of Normandy and England.⁶¹ William the Conqueror, after all, had made land at Pevensey in 1066 on the feast day of St Michael, the greatest of the warrior angels.⁶² Henry III spent the feast of the translation of St Edward at Westminster in all save fifteen of his fifty-six years as

⁵⁶ Geoffrey of Vigeois, in *RHGF*, vol. XVIII, p. 215

⁵⁷ William Rishanger, *Chronica et Annales*, ed. H. T. Riley, RS (London, 1865), p. 20. Rishanger's claim that no previous king had dared enter Oxford, for fear of the saint and her curse, is clearly a later fabrication. For other examples, see the useful article by W. T. Mitchell, 'The Shrines of English Saints in War-Time before the Reformation', *Pax: The Quarterly Review of the Benedictines of Prinknash*, 30 (1940), 71–80, whose date of publication is worth noting.

⁵⁸ Howden, *Chronica*, vol. III, pp. 107–8, and for earlier, continental evidence of the deliberate timing of battles, see H. M. Schaller, 'Der heilige Tag als Termin in mittelalterlicher Staatsakte', *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters*, 30 (1974), 1–24. The pilgrims who chose St James's day 1190 to launch an attack upon Saladin, were surely not acting by random coincidence: Howden, *Chronica*, vol. III, p. 70.

⁵⁹ Kemp, 'Miracles of the Hand of St James', 17 no. 25.

⁶⁰ Sauvage, 'Vita B. Hamonis' (above n. 38), 523–4, dated 1167 but more likely to refer to the Breton campaign of 1166.

⁶¹ See Ailred of Rievaulx's letter to Henry II and his life of St Edward, itself delivered to Westminster in the king's presence at the time of the translation of 1163: *PL*, 195, cols. 711–38 at 717, and 737–40, 773–4, tracing the descent of the Anglo-Saxon kings back through Woden to Noah and thence to Adam.

⁶² As noted by Labande, 'Les pèlerinages au Mont St-Michel', p. 239.

king, and from 1238, although not before, he also made it his practice to be at Westminster for the feast of Edward's deposition (5 January).⁶³ By comparison, in only seven years did he arrange to spend any of the three feast days of St Thomas Becket at Canterbury.⁶⁴ As David Carpenter has recently suggested, the timing of Henry's re-translation of the relics of St Edward, in October 1269, was almost certainly determined by the fact that the Easter calendar of 1269 coincided precisely with the calendar of 1163, the year in which the saint's body had first been translated.⁶⁵

So far, we have considered royal acts of devotion, pilgrimages in the broadest sense, that were intended to invoke the aid, or offer thanks to the saints for very particular benefits. More subtle were those journeys or devotions that appear to mark changes of the king's mind or policy. We find something of this intention in Henry II's visit to Canterbury in 1174. Where previously Henry's hostility to St Thomas and his attempt to prohibit the veneration of Becket's shrine were believed to have called down civil war upon his realm, his tearful reconciliation with the martyr's remains was widely regarded as having altered the course of the war between Henry and his sons, being followed almost immediately by news of the cancellation of the threatened Flemish invasion and of the capture of the King of Scots at Alnwick.⁶⁶ Emma Mason has suggested that Henry's earlier visit to Rocamadour in 1170 was intended not merely to give thanks for his bodily healing, but to effect a reconciliation with his southern subjects in Aquitaine.⁶⁷ In much the same way, on a visit to the Limousin in 1182, Henry is said to have taken a particular interest in the

⁶³ The typescript 'Itinerary' of Henry III at the PRO suggests that Henry was at Westminster on 13 October in every year of his reign save 1223, 1228–32, 1236–7, 1242, 1245, 1253–4, 1262–3 and 1266, these absences for the most being explained by his preoccupations in campaigning or overseas. He was at Westminster on 5 January in 1220, 1225, and thereafter from 1238, save for the years 1243, 1252, 1254, 1257, 1260, 1264 and 1266.

⁶⁴ Henry was at Canterbury for the feast of Becket's return from exile (2 December) in 1220, 1237 and 1263; for the feast of Becket's translation (7 July) in 1220, 1222, 1228 and 1262, and for the feast of Becket's martyrdom (29 December) in 1240, 1254, 1262 and 1263.

⁶⁵ As argued in a paper by David Carpenter, to appear in M. Prestwich (ed.), *Thirteenth Century England*, vol. VIII (Woodbridge, forthcoming).

⁶⁶ The coincidence between Henry's pilgrimage and the capture of William of Scots was noted by virtually every contemporary chronicler, on occasion with exaggerated detail. See, for example, Howden, *Gesta*, vol. I, p. 72; *Materials*, vol. III, p. 547; Geoffrey of Vigewois, in *RHGF*, vol. XII, p. 443; and the chronicle of Saint-Aubin at Angers, P. Marchegay and E. Mabille (eds.), *Chroniques des églises d'Anjou* (Paris, 1869), pp. 42–3. For Henry's earlier attempts to discourage pilgrims to Canterbury, see *Materials*, vol. IV, pp. 160–1.

⁶⁷ Mason, 'Rocamadour in Quercy', p. 51. See also the interesting mixture of motives that may have drawn Louis IX to Rocamadour in 1244, as examined by J. Juillet, 'Saint Louis à Rocamadour', *Bulletin de la Société des Etudes littéraires, scientifiques et artistiques du Lot*, 92 (1971), 19–30.

cult of St Yrieix, sending for a life of the saint, and, even more remarkably, reading it, before leaving offerings at the shrine. In doing so, he may have hoped to stamp royal approval upon a cult, previously dominated by the independently minded viscounts of Limoges.⁶⁸

By the summer of 1232, King Henry III was anxious to escape from the tutelage of his justiciar Hubert de Burgh, yet apprehensive of the consequences. He used the ritual of a journey to the Holy Rood of Bromholm in Norfolk as an opportunity to effect major changes in his counsel. This change had been signalled a few weeks earlier, when at Worcester, in May 1232, Henry had presided over the removal of the body of his father King John to a new tomb in the cathedral, thereby signalling the final passing of the old order whilst at the same time honouring his father's memory by generous gifts to the Worcester monks. In the same way, in 1234, following a disastrous flirtation with the regime presided over by Peter des Roches, Henry signalled his intention to break with des Roches by retracing his steps to the same shrine at Bromholm that had witnessed his political conversion two years earlier. In 1234 he placed a silver likeness of himself on the shrine, almost certainly a votive offering to commemorate a recovery, not from physical but from what the king conceived to have been his political and intellectual infirmity.⁶⁹ Twenty years later, in 1254, having conducted a fruitless campaign in Gascony, and by now surely aware of the futility of any further attempt to reconquer the lost Plantagenet lands in France, Henry travelled to Fontevraud and there with his own hands helped to translate the body of his mother, Isabella of Angoulême, from her original resting place in the chapter-house to a more fitting tomb close to those of the Plantagenet rulers Henry II, Richard and Eleanor of Aquitaine.⁷⁰ If we care to read it as such, this translation can be regarded as Henry's fond farewell to the old Plantagenet order. It was followed within a few days by the King's visit to Paris and the opening of negotiations with Louis IX that were to culminate, five years later, in Henry's official renunciation of his claims to Normandy and much of his long-lost French dominion. In 1232 with his father, John, and in 1254 with his mother, Isabella, Henry III came to his parents' remains, not merely to honour them but to bury them, both in the body and the spirit. As Henry Mayr-Harting has pointed out, 'Ritual may sometimes allow a reversal of an action or an attitude of an individual or a society where the

⁶⁸ Geoffrey of Vigeois, in *RHGF*, vol. XII, p. 448; vol. XVIII, pp. 212, 219, and for the saint, see *AS August*, 5: 171–8, esp. 174–5; Abbé Arbellot, *Vie de Saint-Yrieix, ses miracles et son culte* (Paris/Limoges, 1900).

⁶⁹ N. Vincent, *Peter des Roches* (Cambridge, 1996), pp. 291–303, 431–2.

⁷⁰ N. Vincent, 'Isabella of Angoulême: John's Jezebel', in S. D. Church (ed.), *King John: New Interpretations* (Woodbridge, 1999), pp. 214, 219; Paris, *Chronica Majora*, vol. V, p. 475.

loss of face would be too great without it'.⁷¹ Here perhaps we approach something of that 'liminality' that social anthropologists have sought to present as the defining feature of pilgrimage.

Throughout, we must beware of drawing too rigid a distinction between the king's 'political' and 'spiritual' motives. Just as the Plantagenets themselves might have found it hard to appreciate any distinction between pilgrimage and their daily, itinerant devotions, so there was always a political element to their spirituality, and a spiritual element to their politics. Nor should we suppose that pilgrimage became a significant feature of court life only in the aftermath of the Becket dispute, or following the perceived success of Henry II's Canterbury pilgrimage of 1174 in bringing divine justice to bear upon his enemies. Certainly, after 1174, Henry made a number of further pilgrimages – to Canterbury, Bury and Ely in 1177, for example all of these being described specifically as *peregrinationes*.⁷² However, there are as many examples of such journeys being made by the king before as after 1174. We have already cited the king's journey to Rocamadour in 1170, and his visits to Mont-Saint-Michel in 1158 and 1166, closely connected to his campaigns in Brittany. In July 1166 he is said to have attended the translation of the relics of St Briec at Angers – in many ways a political act, carried out in the aftermath of the Breton rebellion, to commemorate the removal several centuries before of the relics of a leading Breton saint to the Angevin capital.⁷³ Three years earlier he had been present for the translation of St Edward at Westminster, whose canonisation had been obtained with Henry's active support in 1161.⁷⁴ In March 1162 he had been present at Fécamp for the ceremonial reburial of the bodies of Dukes Richard I and Richard II of Normandy.⁷⁵ The gifts he made before 1172 to the abbeys of Cerisy, Lisieux and St Augustine's Bristol to mark their dedications

⁷¹ H. Mayr-Harting, 'Functions of a Twelfth-Century Shrine: The Miracles of St Frideswide', in Mayr-Harting and Moore (eds.), *Studies in Medieval History*, p. 206.

⁷² Howden, *Gesta*, vol. 1, pp. 158–9; W. Stubbs (ed.), *Gervase of Canterbury, Historical Works*, 2 vols., RS (London, 1879–80), vol. 1, pp. 261–2.

⁷³ L. Delisle and E. Berger (eds.), *Recueil des Actes de Henri II roi d'Angleterre et duc de Normandie concernant les provinces françaises et les affaires de France*, 3 vols. (Paris, 1916–27), vol. 1, no. 258; Marchegay and Mabille (eds.), *Chroniques des églises d'Anjou*, pp. 149–50, and for the saint, part of whose remains were eventually restored to the church of St-Briec, following the Plantagenet loss of Normandy and Anjou, see F. Plaine (ed.), *Vie inédite de Saint Briec évêque et confesseur (420–515)* (Saint-Briec, 1883), esp. pp. xv–xvii, 29–30; *AS May*, 1: 91–4.

⁷⁴ B. W. Scholz, 'The Canonization of Edward the Confessor', *Speculum*, 36 (1961), 38–60, esp. pp. 49–60.

⁷⁵ Delisle and Berger (eds.), *Recueil des Actes de Henri II*, vol. 1, nos. 222–3; Torigny, 'Chronica', pp. 212–13, and for a possible gift made on this occasion, see S. E. Jones, 'The Twelfth-Century Reliefs from Fécamp: New Evidence for their Dating and Original Purpose', *JBA*, 138 (1985), 79–88.

suggest strongly that he had attended these ceremonies in person, whilst there is no doubt that he was present for the dedication of Reading Abbey by Archbishop Becket in April 1164, followed by three days of junketings paid for by the king.⁷⁶ It was Reading that housed the most precious and in some ways the most personal of the dynasty's relics, the hand of St James, and it was at Reading that several members of Henry's family, including his eldest son William, were buried *ad limina*.⁷⁷ Depending upon how we interpret them, all of these ceremonies and journeys before 1174 have a greater or lesser degree of political or spiritual significance. Taken *en masse*, they suggest that there was nothing new or extraordinary about the king's enthusiasm for pilgrimages and religious ceremonial in the aftermath of Becket's death.

Beyond his own participation in pilgrimages and religious devotions, the king also had a role to play in fostering the pilgrimages of others. Here we should think not just of the contributions made by various kings towards the cost of the crusades, or of their support for the military orders in the East, established to protect the pilgrim route to Jerusalem. Shortly after his accession to the throne, Henry II awarded land at Havering for the foundation of a priory attached to the hospital of Montjoux in the Grand Saint-Bernard Pass, intended to assist pilgrims crossing the Alps to Rome.⁷⁸ King John likewise granted the Essex church of Writtle as the endowment for a small English congregation attached to the hospital of the Holy Ghost in S. Maria in Sassia, a foundation that had provided shelter to English pilgrims in Rome since long before the Norman

⁷⁶ Delisle and Berger (eds.), *Recueil des Actes de Henri II*, vol. I, nos. 188, 407; 2, supplement no. 31; D. Walker (ed.), *The Cartulary of St Augustine's Abbey, Bristol*, Gloucestershire Record Series 10 (1998), p. 5 no. 7; Torigny, 'Chronica', p. 221, and for the precise date of the dedication of Reading, see C. W. Previté-Orton, 'Annales Radingenses Posteriores, 1135-1264', *EHR*, 37 (1922), 400.

⁷⁷ For the relic, see Kemp, 'Miracles of the Hand of St James'; K. Leyser, 'Frederick Barbarossa, Henry II and the Hand of St James', *EHR*, 90 (1975), 481-506. For the burial at Reading of the king's eldest son William (d.1156), and cousin Earl Reginald (d.1175), and for gifts made with specific reference to the hand of St James by the future King John, see Torigny, 'Chronica' pp. 189, 268; B. R. Kemp (ed.), *Reading Abbey Cartularies*, 2 vols., Camden Society 4th series 31 and 33 (1986-7), vol. I, pp. 68-9, nos. 42-3. For the possibly special significance that may have attached to the saint's hand as an object appropriate to a cult of kings, see W. A. Chaney, *The Cult of Kingship in Anglo-Saxon England: The Transition from Paganism to Christianity* (Manchester, 1970), p. 116, citing the example of the hand of St Oswald, for which see also D. Rollason, 'St Oswald in Post-Conquest England', and V. Tudor, 'Reginald's Life of Oswald', in C. Stancliffe and E. Cambridge (eds.), *Oswald: Northumbrian King to European Saint* (Stamford, 1995), pp. 168-9, 190-3.

⁷⁸ Delisle and Berger (eds.), *Recueil des Actes de Henri II*, vol. I, nos. 93, 235, 379; vol. II, nos. 722, 755; *VCH Essex*, vol. II, pp. 195-6; H. F. Westlake, *Hornchurch Priory* (London, 1923), and for the priory's mother house, see A. Donnet, *Saint Bernard et les origines de l'hospice du Mont-Joux (Grand-St-Bernard)* (Saint-Maurice, 1942), esp. p. 108ff.

Conquest.⁷⁹ Although he himself made no pilgrimage to St James, in the 1170s, as count of Poitiers, the future Richard I had rained warfare upon various southern lords accused of robbing pilgrims to Compostela. Richard thereby greatly extended the Plantagenet dominion over Gascony, albeit on the pretext of offering shelter and protection to the region's pilgrims.⁸⁰ Likewise, shortly before embarking for crusade, he issued privileges for the Abbey of Saint-Sever and abolished tolls for those crossing the Garonne by the bridge at Agen, both of them not only prominent landmarks on the pilgrim route to St James, but crucial to Plantagenet control of the south.⁸¹ In the Plantagenet, as in most royal law courts, special privileges were accorded to those unable to answer pleas because of their absence on pilgrimage, most notably to the Holy Land, but also to Compostela and Rome.⁸² Just as the king's pilgrim itinerary served to impose authority upon his realm, so that authority was strengthened by the practical measures, by sword and by statute, that the king undertook for the protection of lesser pilgrims.

This in turn must carry us on to consider one final, but much broader theme. The average pilgrim to a shrine brought with him gifts of wax or silver. Kings brought gold, silk, and sometimes significant grants of land. Their gifts, it should be noted, were publicly offered and displayed, specially recorded in the places to which they were given, and often governed by peculiar custom, such as the offering of the 'King's great penny' – a particular coin that was carried from shrine to shrine, offered by the king and then redeemed by his officials for cash – or the Capetian custom of offering four bezants each year to Saint-Denis by first placing them on the king's head and then bowing so that the shrine might receive them as a token of royal homage: a practice already echoed in the eleventh century at Saint-Hilaire in Poitiers, where Henry II and his sons were later to rule as lay abbots.⁸³ But not only did the king bring material gifts. By visiting

⁷⁹ *VCH Essex*, vol. II, pp. 200–1; C. R. Cheney, *Pope Innocent III and England* (Stuttgart, 1976), pp. 237–8; Ortenberg, *English Church and the Continent*, pp. 132–6.

⁸⁰ Howden, *Chronica*, vol. II, pp. 117–18.

⁸¹ E. Martène and U. Durand, *Thesaurus novus anecdotorum* (Paris, 1717), vol. I, pp. 636–7; A. Magen and G. Tholin (eds.), *Archives Municipales d'Agen: Chartes première série (1189–1328)* (Villeneuve-sur-Lot, 1876), pp. 1–2, no. 1, and see Howden, *Chronica*, vol. I, p. 35; Gillingham, *Richard I*, pp. 55–6, 124.

⁸² G. D. G. Hall and M. T. Clanchy (eds.), *The Treatise on the Laws and Customs of the Realm of England Commonly Called Glanvill*, OMT (Oxford, 1993), pp. 16–17, 150–1, and for specific cases, see the many examples cited in the printed *Curia Regis Rolls*, subject index *sub* pilgrimage.

⁸³ For the king's great penny, see Nilson, 'The Medieval Experience at the Shrine' (above n. 1), pp. 120–2. For the ceremonies at Saint-Denis and Poitiers, see Labande, 'St Louis pèlerin' p. 16, citing *RHGF*, vol. XX, pp. 51–2; *Catalogus codicum hagiographicorum latinorum... in Bibliotheca Nationali Parisiensi*, 3 vols. (Brussels, 1889–93), vol. II, pp. 106–7. For a suggestion that similar pennies were reserved for the use of the Anglo-Saxon kings of England, see Chaney, *Cult of kingship*, pp. 70–1.

the saints and their shrines he conferred upon them something equally, or even more precious: his own royal person and presence. To adapt some recent remarks of Alphonse Dupront: the royal pilgrim, by virtue of his own royal presence, conferred upon his chosen place of pilgrimage a particular mark, especially when king succeeded king in making pilgrimage to any one location.⁸⁴ Here too we may need to rethink the accepted view of the role played by pilgrimage in the lives of the Plantagenet kings. Not only were Henry II and his successors itinerant, engaged in a near permanent process of journeying from one church or shrine to another, but they themselves could inspire practices and obeisance from their subjects that might be viewed as a species of secular pilgrimage.

In the Angevin realm, saints needed kings almost as much as kings needed saints. After the Norman conquest, Paul Hayward has shown how hagiographers deliberately, and often fraudulently, introduced the Anglo-Saxon kings into the lives of the saints, in the hope that this royal connection might increase the saints' appeal to their new Norman patrons.⁸⁵ The hagiography of Plantagenet England is littered with examples of saints whose dealings with the king were recorded in the minutest of detail, sometimes, as in the case of St Hugh of Lincoln or St Thomas of Canterbury, almost to the exclusion of their dealings with lesser mortals; in other cases, as with St Gilbert of Sempringham, or St Robert of Knaresborough, as an incidental but nonetheless significant fact.⁸⁶ Not many of these dealings, of course, showed the king in a favourable light. Consider, for example, the prophecy attributed by Gerald of Wales to St Bernard of Clairvaux, who when asked to predict the future of the young Henry II, is said to have announced that 'From the Devil he came, and to the Devil he will surely go'.⁸⁷ Nonetheless, either for good or for ill, the king's presence is an essential feature of most English saints' lives: a feature that distinguishes the Plantagenet saints from their counterparts in less strongly governed regions, such as northern Italy or Germany, and

⁸⁴ A. Dupront, *Du Sacré: Croisades et pèlerinages, images et langages* (Paris, 1987), pp. 317–18, also cited by J. Le Goff, *Saint Louis* (Paris, 1996), p. 539.

⁸⁵ P. A. Hayward, 'Translation-Narratives in Post-Conquest Hagiography and English Resistance to the Norman Conquest', in *ANS*, vol. xxi (1999), pp. 67–93. For the nonetheless significant role of the Anglo-Saxon kings in promoting the cult of the saints, see Rollason, *Saints and Relics*, pp. 114–20.

⁸⁶ For St Robert and St Gilbert, see B. Golding, 'The Hermit and the Hunter', in J. Blair and B. Golding (eds.), *The Cloister and the World: Essays in Medieval History in Honour of Barbara Harvey* (Oxford, 1996), pp. 95–117; R. Foreville and G. Keir (eds.), *The Book of St Gilbert*, OMT (Oxford, 1987), pp. 72–5, 82–5, 92–3, 104–7. The case of St Thomas hardly requires further reference here. For St Hugh, see the extraordinarily perceptive essay by K. Leyser, 'The Angevin Kings and the Holy Man', in H. Mayr-Harting (ed.), *St Hugh of Lincoln* (Oxford, 1987), pp. 49–73.

⁸⁷ Gerald of Wales, 'De principis instructione', in Gerald, *Opera*, ed. J. S. Brewer and J. F. Dimock, 8 vols., RS (London, 1861–91), vol. viii, p. 309.